

Since the best answer to theoretical polemics is practice, people should look at the two articles in this issue on Denver and Detroit, to find out what really is happening with the National Action and adventurist, elitist, sectarian Weatherman organizing. However, it seems necessary to reply to some of Klonsky's most outstanding and outlandish points.

Klonsky gives three basic political reasons for why the conception of the National Action being implemented throughout the country is wrong:

(1) He claims that a militant, aggressive, anti-imperialist action will not build the "United Front Against Imperialism", supposedly the political conception approved by the Convention in June, and the one Klonsky himself subscribes to. It is true that this action will not build a "united front against imperialism". However, it is neither true that such a conception was approved by the Convention, nor that such a conception is in any way correct. By a "united front", we assume Klonsky means ("assume" because he nor anyone has ever been able to make sense out of it) an "anti-imperialist" alliance of workers, students, the petit bourgeoisie, and some sort of national bourgeoisie, leading to the joint rule of these groups and classes in some kind of twilight zone between the destruction of the imperialist class and socialism. This is pure dogmatism, applying the lessons and strategy of the anti-colonial revolutions in China and Vietnam to the imperialist mother country...and what this "united front" means concretely in practice is that we should involve everyone we can possibly get to walk in a peaceful anti-war protest and call it "anti-imperialism".

This is a line that we thought had died even before the Pentagon, when people began digging that anti-war marches weren't enough—even for the working class—and that the movement had to develop a strategy to fight and to win, not just to walk around the block. And further, the only political discussion on the Convention floor in June around the National Action

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resulted in the solid defeat of the paragraph in the Action resolution calling for a United Front. So much for lie number one.

(2) The second political pillar of Klonsky's attack is the belief that the main strategy of SDS should be to organize workers around their own exploitation and to link that exploitation to the Vietnam war. Such a belief completely rejects the need for a fighting, anti-imperialist youth movement, which itself not only raises the issue of imperialism, but also shows people how to fight back (in a way that leafleting at a factory gate never can), and by fighting back provides material support to the vanguard struggles of Third World peoples for national liberation.

According to Klonsky, working people in no way have an interest in imperialism, "either in the short run or in the long run". This particular piece of dogmatism ignores the reality of the material basis for both patriotism and racism within the working class of the mother country. Its result is a movement which does not stress the fight against white supremacy and national supremacy, but instead gets bogged down in reformism and rhetoric.



There are two sides to the position of white mother country workers. First is the aspect of exploitation and oppression due to their being workers. But second, and at times the dominating force in their consciousness, is the privilege that white workers receive from imperialism. How can it be said that workers IN NO WAY benefit from imperialism, even in the short run, when a worker owes his skilled job to the fact that blacks are excluded? Or his relative security from heavy repression to the fact that he is not fighting on the side of black people and the people of the Third World? If people are not given an understanding of the fact that the fight against imperialism will be a long-range fight, that in the short run they will have to give up their privileges under imperialism, then why will people risk the massive repression that will be brought against any truly revolutionary internationalist movement in the short run, or risk being fired during the struggle for black self-determination and equality in the shops?

Short-run privilege has always been the basis of false consciousness (not just bad ideas, as Klonsky, along with PL, implies). The position of relative privilege must be taken into account, explained, and fought by any truly revolutionary movement.

What we have tried to do in the National Action is to apply SDS's Revolutionary Youth Movement strategy by building among working class youth, stressing concrete support for the vanguard of the world-wide struggle, the Vietnamese, black and brown, and all Third World peoples. Anti-imperialism is one key, not a peripheral issue tacked on to immediate reform demands of any workers you can come in contact with. The other key is building a movement that fights, not just talks about fighting. The aggressiveness, seriousness, and toughness of militant

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struggle will attract vast numbers of working class youth, as did the Chicago demonstration last year—and it is the concrete way that white people reject white-skin privilege. By taking risks. By actually siding with the people of the world. This year our action will be even better—because of clearer, more out front politics and a higher level of struggle. (As for Klonsky's charge that we haven't produced any literature that talks about the oppression and exploitation of workers, he should read through the "Bring the War Home" shotgun or the "Occupation Troops Out" shotgun before he makes that charge again. Lie number two.)

(3) The third element in Klonsky's strategy is complete and total reformism. "We must win their confidence by struggling with them (the workers) for their just needs (decent housing, wages, equality for women and national minorities, etc.)..." There are two fundamental errors in this notion.

The first is around Klonsky's failure to distinguish a strategy for the colony from a strategy for the mother country. The black liberation struggle makes demands for community control of police in black communities, black studies programs, etc. These, however, are not simply "reform" demands—they are demands for self-determination, for liberation from imperialism. They are demands to get the imperialists out of the colony. As such they are clearly progressive and go way beyond a reformist program.

The same is not the case in the mother country. Here the just struggles of the people do not necessarily raise consciousness or build a revolutionary movement. Much to the contrary, they often obscure the differences between the colony and the mother country, obscure white-skin privilege, obscure

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internationalism. The history of revolutionary struggle in this country has been a history of white people fighting their "just struggles" at the expense of solidarity and material support to black and brown people and to the oppressed people of the world. How does a wage fight challenge a worker's support of the war? How does decent housing for the white working class challenge white supremacy, when the reality of this country is that it is predominantly black people who live in slums, when it is predominantly black people who have bad jobs or who are unemployed, when it is predominantly black people who fill the prisons and jails, victims of the racist repression of the state?

This is not to say that there are no "just" struggles of the people. It is to say that the most important struggle of the people in the mother country is that of making the revolution—and not just a revolution for them, but for the people of the whole world.

If winning people's confidence means fighting with them in struggles that do not forward the revolution, then that "confidence" is worthless and the time spent on it wasted.

The second error in Klonsky's assertion is that it implies that we CANNOT win people's confidence by fighting imperialism. That we must first prove to people that we like them, and are nice people. Revolution, Mao reminds us, is not a dinner party, and the ties to revolutionary struggle between the people had better not be simply because we're "nice"—but because we are fighting the enemy, and holding a strategy that can win. The "serve the people" strategy, by assuming that white people cannot be won to anti-imperialism because of the content of the revolution, but only by some magical acts of trickery, is a strategy to lose. The same strategy as the old "ERAP" projects, where organizers served the people by hiding their politics, never challenged the consciousness of the people, and never made it possible for the people to change through struggle. It is also, in many ways, the strategy of the Worker Student Alliance, where students join in the struggles of workers to prove that "we're not just a bunch of rich kids out to serve ourselves" (from Klonsky's article), along with the dogmatic idealization of the white working class and rejection of the primacy of anti-imperialism. Who does an anti-imperialist youth movement serve? Rich kids.

If we are really engaging in anti-imperialist struggle, the question of who we are serving will be clear—the people of the whole world, including the American working class. And we

serve them, as well as ourselves, by building a movement engaged in concrete struggle in support of national liberation for oppressed peoples, a movement oriented toward power for the oppressed people of the whole world.

Klonsky's attack on the Macomb action in Detroit, as well as his charges of our failings in relation to other "proletarian" organizations, both stem from the errors of the United Front, Serve the People strategy. With the Macomb action, he fails to see the value of challenging the students about the bullshit they're being fed in school, as well as the value of challenging and undercutting the teacher's role as an authority. Equally important, he misses the entire thrust of the world-wide women's liberation struggle: becoming a fighting force against imperialism. In terms of other proletarian organizations, he fails to critically evaluate the position of the Young Patriots (see last week's NLN), as well as failing to recognize that, because of the separate nature of the black liberation struggle, as well as the different levels of struggle, it is appropriate for the Panthers and Lords not to engage in the National Action—but to build the struggle for liberation in the colony, while we engage in the strategy for revolution in the mother country.

Finally, Klonsky's break with the National Action staff did not come only over his ad-hominem attack on the leadership of the Mobe—that they were people "who only wanted to hold the world together long enough to spend their money". Before he left we engaged in struggle around the entire conception of the action. Klonsky argued for a one-day march, organizing for the action through a "united front", and limiting the overall militancy of the action itself. In essence, Klonsky's plan was to replace the old United Front (MOBE) by building a new United Front with the same tactics, and essentially the same politics, and naming it "anti-imperialist".

And here's where the attack on the MOBE comes in. If you're doing approximately the same thing revisionists are doing, you have to do something to show that you're not the MOBE or the CP. So you spend a lot of time attacking them. The National Action staff, on the other hand, guaranteed that revisionist politics would not define the action by allowing the MOBE in only if they agreed with our slogans and tactics. They refused, so they split.

In the end, practice will prove what's what. Klonsky should go out and hold rallies in working-class neighborhoods, and Weatherman people should continue organizing a fighting anti-imperialist working class youth movement. Enough said.